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UN SUB-COMMISSION 1987 - ITEM 9

Organisation: NAILS
TESTIMONY ON TORTURE IN EAST TIMOR

Mr. Chairman,

It has been stated, in this Sub-Commission many times in the past, especially by representatives of the NAILS Organisation, that foreign domination and occupation result almost inevitably in systematic violations of basic individual rights.

I am a Timorese and the first to speak on behalf of this organisation.

I was 13 years old when Indonesian military forces invaded Eat Timor. Following the invasion, I fled to the bush with the resistance. Later I was captured by the Indonesian forces. I was then, sent to a prison called Komarka, in Dili in 1980. I was held there, until being transferred to the island of Atauro on 3rd September. In July 1984, I was released. I started working with the Indonesian Red Cross in 1985 and at the beginning of 1987 arrived in Portugal under the family reunification programme.

Mr. Chairman,

For 12 years, I personally witnessed a great number of arbitrary executions, imprisonment, and torture, evidencing a systematic disregard for the most essential civil and political rights of the East Timorese.

In 1978-1979 the Indonesian armed forces carried out a large scale offensive against the East Timorese resistance and the civilian population.

Part of my family were with me in the bush. We were all concentrated in one area and incidiary bombs were dropped on us. I managed to escape but my brother was killed during a fight. One of my sisters disappeared during the intense bombardement and my family and I, never saw her again.

In 1980 I was arrested by Indonesian troops and subjected to interrogations and torture. Every Indonesian guard used his own method of torture to force me to admit to crimes. Different methods of torture were used :

I was beaten by gun butts and kicked.

My hands and feet were tied up and I was pushed into a tank of water, head first and held under water by the feet for up to, 2 minutes. Then, I was pulled up again and interrogated. As long as I did not confess, the same operation was repeated. Once I confessed in my near drowning state, more

questions were asked and torture was used again.

I was tied up and two small types of crocodiles (buaya Kecil) were tied to my body. When the tails of the animals were pulled, they scratched, clawed and bit me, digging their nails and their teeth into my skin. During this time I was asked further questions.

I saw my friends being tortured too. I saw them subjected to electric shocks, beaten by iron and wooden rods, their toes being placed under a table leg, with soldiers and officials sitting on top of the table, cigarettes extinguished on the skin, in the ears and on the sexual organs. They were also kicked with heavy leather boots in the chest.

I was then taken to a secret prison (komarka). I was locked up in a very small cell, 1m. by 2m. with 9 people. I could not sleep and I did not know whether it was night or day. I was given only a spoonful of rice per day. From time to time, the guards openend the door and called one prisoner out. I never saw them again.

Later, I was taken to Atauro island with my friends and I was there, for four years. I was not allowed to speak with foreign people who were brought by military helicopters. During an Australian delegation visit, I and my fellow prisoners were brutally beaten and threatenend with being shot, because we dared speak with them. The same event happenend when Portugese journalists visited the island of Atauro, after they returned, four of my fellows were tortured and sent to Komarka prison.
I was starving; all we had to eat was a small tin of corn for a whole week. I did not have any medical treatment when I fell sick. I was often beaten when I arrived late for work.

There are many other prisons in Dili, Aileu and other parts of the territory, with small numbers of prisoners. I, myself had entered in one of these prisons, without the knowledge of the troops and I saw 6 prisoners with swollen faces and other signs of ill-treatment.
Every two months, the troops checked at mid-night the homes of the population; suitcases, identification cards, wardrobes were all checked.

I am concerned about the fate of my friends who are still in East Timor. I have personally witnessed and been a victim of the gross violations of human rights, resulting from the Indonesian government's efforts to consolidate its Colonial domination of East Timor, and I believe that, until the genuine wishes of the East Timorese people themselves are respected, the suffering will continue.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.